



LIFE BLOOD *Life Line*

VOLUME 1, ISSUE 1

Heidelberg Medical Department Activity

SPECIAL POINTS OF INTEREST:

- Welcome to the first issue of the LIFE BLOOD Life Line, a news-letter for you—our beneficiaries!
- Reminder: Get your flu vaccination today! Flu Zone and Flu Mist available at all HMEDDAC clinics!

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Patient and Family-Centered Care

By Irene Misiewicz, Patient Volunteer

Do you want to make a difference in your healthcare? Consider joining one of the HMEDDAC Patient Advisory Councils.

The Patient and Family Centered Care philosophy takes the voices and concerns of patients and families and integrates them into all levels of HMEDDAC. The council wants to create a system in which patients are no longer seen as visitors, but as a part of a team working side-by-side. A team based upon four simple concepts: Information sharing among patient, family, and healthcare providers;

respect and dignity for the needs, concerns, and perspectives of the patient and family, while taking into account their personal beliefs, values, and cultural backgrounds; choice and participation in the education, information, and decision making process; and collaboration with all levels of HMEDDAC.

The hope is to achieve this goal by blending the voices of patients and families with those of administration, clinicians, and staff in order to provide a better system of care.

For more information, contact your clinic, or the Heidelberg Patient Advocate at civilian 06221-17-2666, DSN 371-2666.

Had an appointment? Fill out a survey!

By Jutta Shoots, Patient Advocate

Patient Satisfaction is one of the key focus areas of our Army Medical Command.

The "Army Provider-Level Patient Satisfaction Survey" is your way to provide valuable feedback about your healthcare.

Each day patients who went to see a provider are randomly selected to participate in the APLSS.

This patient satisfaction program uses two different means of collecting information. About one-third of the patients receive a questionnaire in the mail. The questionnaire asks questions specifically about the interaction the provider had with

the patient and it also asks about scheduling, waiting, facility and other services. The questionnaire is printed on both sides of a single page, which is sent back in a postage-paid envelope.

The other two-thirds of the patients receive a letter asking them to call a toll-free telephone number and complete a survey. Both sets of respondents are given the option to complete the survey on-line.

Your effort will help us bring more and better services to you. Please let us know what you think every time you receive one of the surveys.

If you have questions, call the patient advocate at DSN 371-2666.



How do they decide when to see me?

The US Army Medical Department Activity, Heidelberg is committed to providing you unimpeded access to medical care. As such, it is important that you, the beneficiary, understand the access to care standards by which your servicing medical treatment facility is being measured. Familiarizing yourself with the standards will improve your understanding of the challenges associated with medical appointing and assist HMEDDAC in improving our ability to get you an appointment that is convenient for you.

At HMEDDAC, we are required to book your appointments based on your medical condition and healthcare needs. We categorize your appointments using the following methodology:

Acute- Appointment will be scheduled within 24 hours. Acute issues are designed for beneficiaries who have non-emergent, urgent care that requires treatment within 24 consecutive hours, i.e. Flu-like symptoms when the patient determines they need care right away, or a sports injury that occurred very recently.

Routine- Appointment will be scheduled within 7 calendar days. Routine appointments are designated for patients who require an office visit with their Primary Care Manager or mental health provider for a healthcare problem that is not urgent, i.e. a previously diagnosed condition for which intervention is required but not urgent.

Specialty Care – Appointment will be scheduled within 28 days. These appointments are used for specialty care and primary care clinics with specialty care. Specialty Clinics include Optometry, Audiology, Dermatology, and Gynecology.

HMEDDAC is dedicated to ensuring our beneficiaries get the right appointment at the right time at the right place. In the past six months, HMEDDAC has had a 99% and higher compliance rate with access standards. This is due to the dedication of the HMEDDAC staff to ensure there are consistently the right numbers of appointments available by type to provide outstanding quality healthcare for our beneficiaries.

HMEDDAC is on Facebook!

Find us at www.facebook.com/hmeddac

Get information and updates from your health clinics.

Become a fan today!

New TRICARE Overseas Contract Support for Standard Beneficiaries

FALLS CHURCH, Va. – International SOS Assistance, the new TRICARE Overseas Program (TOP) contractor, will bring more comprehensive, patient centered and customer-focused service to nearly half a million TRICARE beneficiaries overseas starting Sept. 1, 2010.

Under the new contract, non-active duty beneficiaries living overseas will still enjoy the same TRICARE Standard benefit – no enrollment fees and the freedom to choose a host nation provider without a referral – as well as new customer service features. Starting Sept. 1, Standard beneficiaries can contact a TOP regional call center to get assistance finding a provider in their area.

Call center representatives will also provide program and benefit information

24/7, and the TOP contractor will provide some claims assistance through TRICARE Service Centers (TSCs), call centers and overseas claims processors.

As the new contract begins, Standard beneficiaries overseas are reminded of important information they need to make sure their healthcare needs are met and claims processes are trouble-free:

- Obtain a payment receipt and file for reimbursement as soon as possible. TRICARE claims must be filed within a year of date of service.
- Beneficiaries should be aware that they are responsible for annual deductibles and cost-shares.
- Beneficiaries are responsible for filling out and

filing claims. military treatment facilities (MTFs) and contract representatives can not fill out, accept or process claims forms from beneficiaries or providers.

Some overseas MTFs currently allow beneficiaries who are normally TRICARE Standard to enroll to the facility on a space-available basis and receive primary care under TRICARE Plus. The new contract does not change TRICARE Plus, but its availability, as well as space-available care in MTFs, is determined by the commander based on resources. Even when enrolled to an MTF under Plus, when getting care outside of the MTF, beneficiaries are still responsible for paying deductibles and cost shares, and filing claims.

For more information about the new top contract and to download a new overseas handbook, including new contact information, go to www.tricare.mil/topcontract.

TRICARE ONLINE update

On June 30, we saw the unveiling of TRICARE Online Booking Appointments for Minors (TBAM). Have you tried it yet? If you log in to TRICARE Online you can see that something has changed.

If you're a Sponsor, you'll see all your minor children listed; if you're a Spouse, you'll see a block for "Book an Appointment for Myself." As a Spouse, once you have a DS Logon and Access granted, you will be able to book an appointment for all your minor family members. EVERY sponsor and spouse should register on TOL using the DS Logon. This should be done even if the beneficiary already has an active TOL account that they use frequently. Don't let your beneficiaries miss out!

If you need assistance or more information on TRICARE Online or TRICARE Online Booking Appointments for Minors, please contact E.J. Eiteljorge, terrance.eiteljorge@us.army.mil or 210-221-7217.

Need a refill on your prescription?



You can call in your prescription refill using the automated pharmacy refill line. Or, log on to TRICARE online and order your refill using the web site.

Refilling your prescriptions can be an easy process.

There are two simple ways to get your refills without having to wait in the regular pharmacy line.

You can call in your prescription refill using the automated pharmacy refill line. Or, log on to TRICARE online and order your refill using the web site.

Both options are available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. The re-filled prescription will be prepared and ready for pick-up the next duty day after 0900. This allows the pharmacy time to prepare your prescriptions in advance; saving

you time and helping the pharmacy improve service for everyone!

Call in your refills today to the toll free phone number: 00800-7446-2500 or commercial 06371-865601 or DSN 486-5601. Remember to select our footprint locations (Heidelberg) then choose the individual clinic you plan to pick up your refilled medications from. The Heidelberg footprint consists of the Heidelberg Health Center, the Stuttgart Health Clinic, the Mannheim Health Clinic and the Coleman Health Clinic.

You may also refill your prescription online at the TRICARE website:

www.tricareonline.com

Follow the directions and select the prescription pick-up location.

Regardless of which method you use, you can rest assured that your prescription refills will be ready on time and waiting for you. This is another way our health-care team is here to help you.

Stop by an HMEDDAC Pharmacy for more information!



“ERMC Care Call Center” streamlines your appointments

The Europe Regional Medical Command (ERMC) Care Call Center officially opened April 26 in Heidelberg to provide centralized telephone appointment-making services for routine medical appointments at Army health facilities throughout Europe. The call center is an ERMC initiative to streamline the process of making medical appointments.

The call center is established with the customer in mind. The goal is to ensure the appointment-making experience is a positive one for every Army beneficiary in Europe. The benefits of the call center are:

- You can reach from anywhere in Europe using the new toll free number (0080-37622273 or 0080-ERMCCARE)
- There is not a long message string before you reach a human-being.
- Your call will be answered in less than 90 seconds during the busiest times of the day (the current average wait time is 30 seconds

for your call to be answered).

- Takes care of your medical need with one call.
- Considers your personal scheduling requirements.
- Provides exceptional customer service.

The call center currently serves five of the 19 Army medical facilities in Europe (Coleman, Heidelberg, Illesheim, Katterbach, and Mannheim). More than thirty booking clerks will be employed to make medical appointments at the call center. Hours of operation are 6 a.m.-6 p.m. weekdays (Monday through Friday). The call center will be closed on weekends and Federal holidays.

“This is an efficient phone call tree system designed to streamline the appointment process by providing quick access to appointment clerks, the Nurse Advice Line and clinic-specific information,” said MAJ Raul Jurado, chief of the clinical operations division for Heidelberg Medical Department Activity

and project officer for the call center initiative.

One Europe-wide toll-free phone number will reach the call center, **00800-3762-2273** or 00800-ERMC-CARE, although for phones with limited dialing capability the call center can also be reached at DSN 371-2622 or civilian 06221-17-2622.

Beneficiaries can schedule primary care medical appointments through the call center or be connected to a registered nurse through the Nurse Advice Line.

Another option for patients who have access to the internet is TRICARE On Line (TOL). TRICARE Online is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week at www.tricareonline.com. All you have to do is register and you can start booking your own medical appointments online. It's easy, it's convenient and it's free.

It's easy to make

an appointment:

Dial 00800-3762-2273;

or DSN 371-2622;

or 06221-17-2622.

You can also visit

www.tricareonline.com

any time!

You can see we do our very best every day to take care of you and your family!



Patient Safety: Doing Our Part

*By CPT Shanda Baxter,
Patient Safety Officer*

In 1999 the Institute of Medicine (IOM) published a report called "*To Err is Human: Building a Safer Health System*". This report stated that there were 98,000 preventable deaths yearly costing \$17-29 billion nationally, and 10-35% of the patients suffer from preventable adverse drug events. Eleven years after publication of the IOM report, patient safety remains a challenge in hospitals and clinics across the world. The consensus is that the solution to the problem of medical mistakes lay in the health care delivery process—as opposed to blaming individual healthcare providers. Efforts to improve health care safety and quality are also dependent on teamwork. The Heidelberg Medical Department Activity, which includes Heidelberg Health Center and the Health Clinics at Stuttgart, Mannheim, and Coleman, is committed to identifying opportunities for improving patient safety and to support our healthcare staff to mitigate risk and prevent adverse events.

A major component of any health care system is its culture, defined as shared attitudes, values and goals, along with a shared way of acting and interacting among a group of individuals. A

culture of patient safety requires active participation by leadership, open communication, and a sense of security in reporting patient safety events. HMEDDAC engages leadership at all levels to foster a culture of patient safety. The HMEDDAC Patient Safety Program facilitates a non-punitive, interdisciplinary approach to patient safety that focuses on risk reduction strategies and the reengineering of systems and processes to improve the quality of healthcare. The Patient Safety Program is a proactive process that seeks to provide a sustainable solution rather than a quick fix. All departments participate in the program by identifying potential safety problems and submitting a report to the Patient Safety Manager. These reports are viewed by a variety of personnel including Department Chiefs, Deputy Chiefs, the Infection Control Manager, and the Chief of Safety to name a few. Each looks at current processes and through positive collaboration develops recommendations for improvements that could ultimately prevent an adverse event while improving levels of safety and efficiency.

Patients and family members are also an integral part of the Patient Safety Team. They play a central role in im-

proving the quality and safety of healthcare. Each patient and family member brings a unique perspective on the performance of the health-care system and how it can be improved.

Patients can ensure a safer experience with the health care system by being involved and informed about their treatment. Patients and families are encouraged to assist in developing the treatment plan. By maintaining an accurate medication list to present at each visit, asking questions and following through on prescribed treatment and instructions, patients can take part in the safety process and gain confidence in the system. Improving patient safety requires continuous learning and the constant communication of information among providers, patients, and the health care organization.

Patient safety is a public health priority. The Heidelberg Health Center encourages patient and family participation in the Patient Advisory Council. HMEDDAC envisions a healthcare system that is systems-based and patient-centered. When everyone has a role in patient safety, everyone will benefit from its successes. For more information, contact: Patient Safety Officer, CPT Shanda Baxter 06221-17-2284.

**For more
information,
contact:
Patient
Safety
Officer
CPT Shanda
Baxter
06221-17-
2284**

Health Tips: Shoulder pain— should I get help?

By Dr. Jennifer Schwomeyer,
DPT
Chief, Mannheim Physical
Therapy

It's that time again. PT test time. And what does that mean? People have sore shoulders from doing a lot of push ups. Shoulder pain typically occurs from overuse, just like many other joint pains. However, it should be treated if it sticks around, especially if you have had it for more than several months.

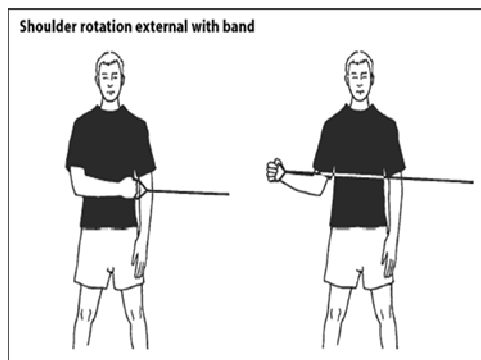
There are different reasons we get shoulder pain, but the most common culprit is tightness and weakness in the back of our shoulder, which is where the majority of the muscles are that help stabilize our shoulder joint. These muscles are called the *rotator cuff*. These muscles stiffen up after doing exercise and should be stretched. The sleeper stretch, pictured at right, is one effective way of stretching

them. This is especially important after lifting weights or doing push ups.

There are various ways to strengthen our shoulder muscles. What is very important to keep in mind is that you should not push through pain. Most people feel that as long as they work on strengthening by continuing to do push ups or chest pressing, then eventually their shoulder pain will get better. But what they are actually doing is making their shoulder pain worse. The best way to strengthen the shoulder is to

start off below shoulder height, because this puts less stress on the shoulder.

It is important to strengthen the rotator cuff because our shoulder relies on these muscles to keep the joint functioning properly.



One of the best ways to do this is with a rubber band, as pictured above. You will be amazed at how difficult this exercise is. Try it 3-4 times/week, rest from push ups and overhead activities for a while, ice your shoulder and see your doctor about taking anti-inflammatories.

As long as you don't overdo it, your shoulder should improve. If not, see your doctor or physical therapist.



Monthly Health Themes to Think About

Each month has a theme to use as a reminder of important health issues and topics. Here is a partial list of upcoming health-related observances. Use these as a reminder to complete health checkups and keep yourself and your loved ones healthy.

October:

Breast Cancer Awareness Month

National Depression Awareness Month

Pharmacy Month

Eye Injury Prevention Month

Celiac Disease Awareness Month

National Physical Therapy Month

National Child Health Day (4th)

World Mental Health Day (10th)

November:

American Diabetes Month

Lung Cancer Awareness Month

National Healthy Skin Month

Pancreatic Cancer Awareness Month

Great American Smokeout (18th)

December:

Handwashing Awareness Week (5th - 11th)



ERM
EUROPE REGIONAL MEDICAL COMMAND

Commander:

COL P.K. Underwood

Sergeant Major:

SGM Michael S. Mullen

Deputy Commander for Nursing:

COL Lena Gaudreau

Deputy Commander for Clinical Services:

LTC (P) Lance Raney

Deputy Commander for Administration/Chief
of Staff:

LTC Hugh McLean

Public Affairs Officer: Kristen Marquez

kristen.marquez@us.army.mil

HMEDDAC

**MISSION: Positively impact Soldier and Family
Health through high quality integrated health care
while maximizing medical readiness.**

**VISION: To be MEDCOM's recognized leader in
healthcare excellence, saving lives and fostering
healthy resilient people.**

Contacting ISOS in emergency or urgent situations

TRICARE Prime beneficiaries need to be aware of new requirements when they obtain host nation care for urgent health problems.

Pre-Authorization is not required for emergencies.

Emergency Care is defined a medical, maternity or psychiatric condition that would lead a "prudent layperson", i.e. someone with average knowledge of health and medicine, to believe that a serious medical condition exists; that the absence of immediate medical attention would result in a threat to life, limb or sight; when a person has severe, painful symptoms requiring immediate attention to relieve suffering; or when a person is at immediate risk to self or others. *Such care does not require pre-authorization; however, beneficiaries may call International SOS to locate the nearest network provider or emergency room,*

and to obtain assistance – in the host language if needed - if an admission is required.

Effective immediately, Prime beneficiaries must contact the Overseas Managed Care Contractor, International SOS before obtaining urgent after hours care on the economy.

TRICARE defines Urgent Care as medically necessary services required for an illness or injury that would not result in further disability or death if not treated immediately, but do require professional attention within 24 hours. Urgent care could be required for a condition such as a sprain, sore throat or rising temperature, as each of these has the potential to develop into an emergency if treatment is delayed.

International SOS is available 24 hours a day, 7 days per week, and has multiple language capability. The number to call to ob-

tain pre-authorization is

TOLL-FREE: 0800 589 1599 or
0800 181 8505

OR

COMMERCIAL 044 20 8762
8384

International SOS will accept collect calls, and will also return calls if requested.

The purpose of obtaining pre-authorization is to ensure that the patient can see a host nation provider who is part of the network and offers cashless and claimless services to the patient. It also provides an immediate benefits review to ensure that the care to be obtained is a covered benefit.

Further information can be obtained from the new TRICARE Overseas Program Handbook available at every TRICARE Service Center, or from the website www.tricare-overseas.com.